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WASHINGTON POST
18 September 1986

U.S. Names Soviets for Expulsion

Oct. 1 Deadline Set; Shevardnadze Visit Viewed as Uncertain

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Sharpening its conflict with the Soviet Union over the arrest of American journalist Nicholas Daniloff, the Reagan administration yesterday gave the Soviet mission to the United Nations a list of 25 of its members who must leave the United States by Oct. 1.

The Soviet ambassador to the United Nations, Alexander Belonogov, scheduled a news conference for this morning to reply to the U.S. note. Belonogov said last week the U.S. demand to cut back the Soviet mission in New York was "absolutely illegal."

White House officials expressed concern yesterday that Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze might now refuse to come to Washington as scheduled Friday to meet with Secretary of State George P. Shultz, a session planned to prepare for a summit meeting. Uncertainty about the Shevardnadze visit appeared to reflect official concern that the superpowers may have locked themselves into an escalating confrontation.

[In Jurmala, Latvia, a Soviet official warned seven visiting Americans of Latvian descent, all participants in a "town meeting" of Soviet and American citizens, that they were in physical danger because of their activities supporting Latvian independence, and demanded that they "stop spreading tendentious literature." Story on Page A35.]

State Department spokesman Bernard Kalb said that the expulsion order given to the Soviets in New York yesterday was not a response to the Soviet refusal to free Daniloff, and that the decision was taken because the Soviets were

refusing to meet the U.S. demand of last March that the size of their U.N. mission be cut by 25 to 218 before Oct. 1.

"It is not related to any other issue or case," Kalb said.

But senior administration officials, including Secretary of State George P. Shultz, indicated Tuesday that the administration was about to take some retaliatory action to increase the pressure on Moscow to release Daniloff. And several administration officials Tuesday explicitly linked the pending expulsion order to the Daniloff case.

The administration has been criticized by conservatives in Congress and within its own ranks for failing to take a sufficiently hard line with the Soviets to free Daniloff.

The names of the 25 Soviets being expelled were not released. A senior administration official said all 25 were suspected KGB agents. A U.N. source who saw the list said one held the rank of counselor, the third-highest position at the mission, and that several others were second and third secretaries. A number were "technicians," he added.

There were conflicting reports yesterday as to whether the Soviets were already taking steps to meet the Oct. 1 deadline for the first of four cutbacks the administration ordered to reduce the overall size of the Soviet, Ukrainian and Byelorussian missions from 275 to 170 by April 1988.

State Department spokesmen said the Soviets had not cooperated in talks to elicit their plans to meet the Oct. 1 deadline. Belonogov's statement Friday that the U.S. cutback demand was "absolutely illegal" had led the department to believe they were not ready to comply, the spokesman said.

But an official at the U.S. mission to the United Nations said Tuesday that the Soviets were already down to 229 U.N. mission members, with only 212—six fewer than the 218 limit Washington set for Oct. 1—actually present in New York.

"In my opinion, they will be at the 218 figure by Oct. 1 but without saying they are complying with our demand," this American official said.

U.S. officials yesterday continued to say the administration was taking

the Daniloff case with utmost seriousness. But White House spokesman Larry Speakes said it was "premature" to speculate whether President Reagan would decide to call off his proposed summit with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev later this year if Daniloff is not freed.

Reagan, in a statement issued as U.S.-Soviet arms talks resumed in Geneva, said Soviet treatment of Daniloff "continues to limit severely what is achievable in our bilateral relations." He again urged Moscow to resolve the case "before it does even more damage to the relationship between our two countries."

White House officials said there was still a better-than-even chance that Reagan would go ahead with his initial plan to meet with Shevardnadze during his sessions here with Shultz scheduled for Friday and Saturday. Shultz said Tuesday that U.S. demands that Daniloff be freed immediately will be "on the top of the agenda" in his meeting with the Soviet foreign minister. But he also said he plans to discuss a wide range of other issues including arms control, human rights and bilateral matters.

The Soviets have been asking that Daniloff, charged with spying, be exchanged for Gennadi Zakharov, a Soviet U.N. employee who was arrested Aug. 23 in New York and indicted on three counts of espionage. Daniloff and Zakharov have both been released into the custody of their respective ambassadors pending trials or some agreement between Washington and Moscow.

Zakharov worked for the U.N. Secretariat in New York, where 230 Soviets are employed in addition to 19 Ukrainians and five Byelorussians, according to U.N. sources. None of the Soviets work-

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ing there are affected by the cut-backs ordered by the administration last March.

The U.S. decision to order the expulsion of 25 Soviets was delivered by the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Vernon Walters, in a meeting with Belonogov at the Soviet U.N. diplomatic mission shortly after 9 a.m. yesterday.

Richard C. Hottelet, chief spokesman for the U.S. mission, said Walters had told Belonogov "what the score was and that was it. There was no drama. No shots were fired. No blood flowed. It was a businesslike meeting."

Staff writers Lou Cannon and David Hoffman and special correspondent Michael J. Berlin at the United Nations contributed to this report.